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**MAYOR DIXON STATEMENT ON THE INVESTIGATION
INTO THE DEATH OF FPA RACHEAL WILSON**

“In less than a half hour from now, in Denver, Colorado, the family of Rachael Wilson will begin the second and final funeral ceremony for our fallen firefighter paramedic apprentice.

On behalf of all citizens and employees of Baltimore City, I want to offer our deepest condolences to the family of FPA Racheal Wilson for their loss.

I cannot express to you how angry and shocked I was after reading the preliminary reports of this investigation.

Mistakes were made.

Unacceptable mistakes.

There are no excuses for what happened on that day and I can assure you, from this point forward we will do whatever is necessary to prevent this from ever happening again.

I am still reconciling in my head the seemingly haphazard regard for national protocols and procedures that happened that day, with what I know to be one of the best fire departments in the country.

I have in my possession very clear guidelines on how to conduct live burns. And based on the preliminary investigation, at least 25 of these guidelines were not followed. Additionally, the fire department failed to follow some of its own safety procedures.

Based on what I have read, the Rapid Intervention Team was not fully prepared and didn't live up to its responsibilities, too many fires were set, and the assigned safety officer just didn't do his job.

More importantly, the violations of the National Fire Protection Association guidelines that day were obvious.

There were at least 19 firefighters assisting with the burn, at least half of them experienced veteran firefighters.

The legacy we have to face as a city moving forward is that none of these members stepped up when they knew things weren't right. Nobody said anything. And maybe if someone had, FPA Wilson would be alive today.

As a result of these failures, FPA Wilson faced an unacceptable consequence.

Today, those responsible will face consequences as well.

Today I have dismissed Division Chief Kenneth Hyde, the Director of Training at the fire academy.

In addition, I have suspended Lt. Joseph Crest, the incident commander on duty that day and lead instructor Lt. Larry Broyles for 60 days without pay.

It's important that people are held accountable for failures. It is equally important that measures be taken to ensure the future safety of apprentice firefighters.

Today I am ordering a full and independent review of training practices and safety procedures in the Baltimore City Fire Department.

This review will be conducted by a panel of independent fire experts and will be led by Howard County Deputy Fire Chief Chris Shimer. He will be joined by ATF Special Agent Greg Gant.

I want to thank my colleague Howard County Executive Ken Ulman for his support during this difficult time.

The review panel will report directly to me, and will make recommendations for improved training and safety procedures by March 30th.

Fire Chief William Goodwin and the Fire Department will fully cooperate with the review, and it is my intention to implement all appropriate recommendations.

The death of Racheal Wilson was a terrible tragedy, made worse by the knowledge that so much of what happened that day was avoidable. It is a black mark on an otherwise outstanding Fire Department.

While I am deeply disappointed by the events of that day, I will credit Chief Goodwin and his department for their honesty in the weeks since and their sincere desire to do the right thing for the Wilson family and the City of Baltimore.

Again, I offer my deepest condolences to the Wilson family."

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